

Message Text

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SUBJECT: APRIL UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES

REF: TOKYO 7839

1. MONTHLY EMPLOYMENT FIGURES RELEASED BY PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE MAY 30 INDICATE SEASONAL ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN APRIL REACHED 2.2 PERCENT, HIGHEST PERCENTAGE SINCE 2.28 PERCENT RECORDED IN AUGUST 1959 AND .08 PERCENT INCREASE OVER MARCH. AT SAME TIME, HOWEVER, ACTUAL NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED (1.23 MILLION), WHILE OVER 1 MILLION FOR 16TH STRAIGHT MONTH AND 170,000 MORE THAN IN APRIL 1977 DECREASED BY 180,000 FROM MARCH. IN ADDITION, TOTAL EMPLOYMENT ROSE TO 54.13 MILLION, 480,000 MORE THAN IN APRIL 1977 AND A 1.1 MILLION INCREASE OVER PREVIOUS MONTH. NUMBER OF WAGE AND SALARY EARNERS INCREASED TO 38
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MILLION, 260,000 MORE THAN IN MARCH, NUMBER OF FULL-TIME "REGULAR" WORKERS INCREASED BY 200,000 IN MANUFACTURING AND 90 THOUSAND IN CONSTRUCTION AND THERE WAS SIGNIFICANT DECREASE IN TOTAL NUMBERS OF PART-TIME WORKERS AND DAY LABORERS. AVERAGE HOURS WORKED PER WEEK REACHED 45.9, .6 PERCENT INCREASE OVER APRIL 1977 AND 1.1 PERCENT INCREASE OVER MARCH. RATIO JOB OFFERS TO APPLICANTS

REMAIN AT .55 PERCENT, SAME AS IN MARCH.

2. COMMENT: APRIL, WHEN SCHOOL AND COLLEGE GRADUATES NORMALLY ENTER LABOR FORCE FOR FIRST TIME, IS GENERALLY CHARACTERIZED BY INCREASE IN OVERALL EMPLOYMENT FIGURE AS WELL AS DECREASE IN NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED. THEREFORE, BECAUSE THERE WAS LESS OF A DROP IN UNEMPLOYMENT BETWEEN MARCH AND APRIL THIS YEAR THAN THERE WAS IN SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR, SOME PRESS REPORTS HAVE ASSERTED THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN EMPLOYMENT SITUATION. NEVERTHELESS, PRIMIN'S OFFICE HAS AT LAST BEGUN TO TAKE UPBEAT APPROACH, ARGUING THAT INCREASES IN NUMBER OF YOUNG MALES IN LABOR FORCE, PERMANENT EMPLOYEES IN MANUFACTURING AND CONSTRUCTION SECTORS AND AVERAGE WORKING HOURS PER WEEK DEMONSTRATE THAT GOJ'S AMBITIOUS PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAM IS AT LAST HAVING SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT. MANSFIELD

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